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Defector Told of Soviet Alert

KGB Station Reportedly Warned U.S. Would Attack

By Murrey Marder
Washington Post Staff Writer

The London station of the Soviet KGB was placed on extraordinary alert in early 1981 by a Moscow directive stating that the United States was preparing to attack the Soviet Union, according to informed accounts of statements by the most valued British double agent ever to defect from the U.S.S.R.

According to informed sources, Oleg Gordievsky, whose defection after a dozen years as a British double agent inside the Soviet KGB was disclosed last September, told debriefers in London and Washington that KGB agents in Britain were instructed to gather every scrap of information that might bear on the supposedly impending U.S. onslaught.

Gordievsky was reporting an intelligence alert, as distinguished from a regional or global military alert. A military alert would set in train movements of Soviet forces visible to Western spy satellites and other intelligence resources. No evidence of any military moves related to this intelligence alert was detected in the West, sources said.

Headquarters of the KGB ("*Komitet Gosudarstvennoe Bezopastnosti*" in Russian, or committee for state security) on Moscow's Dzerzhinsky Square, according to Gordievsky's account, gave no explanation to its startled agents in London why, how, where, or in what magnitude the attack would come. KGB operatives in London, Gordievsky reportedly has said, considered the stark directive to be overreaction to the unpredictable, muscle-flexing new administration in Washington. But no nation's agents can debate with the control center.

The key words in the 1981-83 directive, as identically related by British and American sources, were that the United States was "going to attack" the Soviet Union.

It is not known if these sources were quoting from the Gordievsky debriefing transcripts, or were paraphrasing what they know. There are many blanks in the Gordievsky sequence, and dozens of questions about it. For example, it could not be learned when Gordievsky told his British handlers about the 1981 order, or whether—if they knew of it in a timely fashion—the British informed the United States right away, or only much later.

Gordievsky, a KGB agent since 1962, was first recruited in 1972 as a double agent when he was stationed in Copenhagen, where he served two tours of duty. He was assigned to London in 1982, became deputy chief of the KGB

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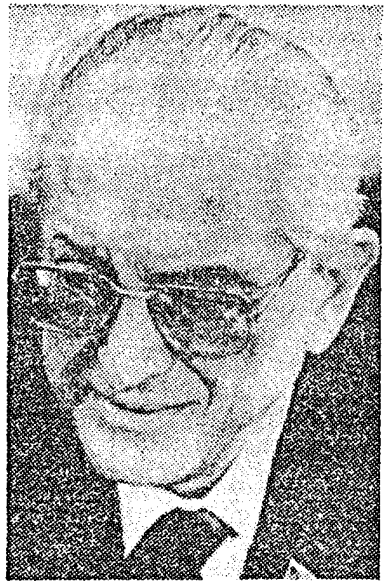


YURI ANDROPOV
. . . headed KGB at time of alert

THE WASHINGTON POST

Soviet Defector's Reports Studied in West

DEFECTOR, From A1

station there and in June 1985 was promoted to station chief.

The British government and the Reagan administration have declined to make any comment on the information in this article or even discuss what was disclosed in London about Gordievsky earlier.

The directive received in London, by Gordievsky's account, was neither a momentary bureaucratic bungle nor a fleeting alarm inside the world's largest espionage and secret police agency, then headed by Yuri Andropov. The order remained in force, Gordievsky reportedly said, through 1982 and until the end of 1983, when it was lifted without explanation.

While the order was in effect, on Nov. 12, 1982, Andropov became the surprise successor to the long-ailing Leonid Brezhnev as general secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, the first former KGB chief ever named Soviet leader.

From 1981 to 1983, Gordievsky reportedly said, special watches were mounted on all activities of conceivable relevance to the supposed U.S. threat: movements of VIPs, U.S.-British meetings, senior officials' limousine traffic. Everything was reported to Moscow in the intelligence sweep—including a blood drive by the Greater London Council.

The Washington Post has confirmed a story first pieced together by BBC-TV reporter Tom Mangold and broadcast last November that Gordievsky made a sensational escape from the Soviet Union last summer, literally under the nose of the KGB, just after he was promoted to station chief and was recalled to Moscow, evidently under Soviet suspicion.

Admiring British and American intelligence experts describe the "exfiltration" of Gordievsky by Britain's MI6 as an operation as imaginative as anything in cloak-and-dagger literature. MI6 chiefs, it is said, assured Gordievsky that if he signaled from Moscow that he was in danger, all the resources of Her Majesty's Government would be drawn on to extricate him—a promise Britain's previously most renowned double agent inside the Soviet system, Col. Oleg Penkovsky, whose information was shared with the United States, was given similar assurances under similar circumstances in 1962 when he risked a recall to Moscow. As Gordievsky well knew, the British government's inability to make good on that commitment to Penkovsky cost him his life.

The 1962 "exfiltration" scheme involved a mock mobile trade exhibit led into Eastern Europe by Penkovsky's intermediary and courier, British businessman and intelligence agent Greville Wynne. Both Penkovsky and Wynne were caught. (Wynne was released in a spy swap in 1964.)

MI6 is said to have been much more imaginative in the Gordievsky case, and even hoped to extricate Gordievsky's wife and two daughters, whom he left behind. Sources said the plan involved transporting Gordievsky by land, air and sea, but details of his escape are still top-secret. American intelligence experts suggest that the escape may still be confounding a furious KGB, and if so could be usable again in some form.

The 47-year-old Gordievsky has been under "deep cover" since his double career was disclosed in London last September. The immediate rebound was expulsion of 31 Soviet officials and reporters from Britain, and the reciprocal expulsion of 31 British officials and reporters from Moscow.

The British are known to consider Gordievsky an unusual defector in many respects, not only for his lengthy service as a double agent. The British reportedly were impressed that Gordievsky had not broken with his homeland out of pique or for materialistic reasons, but sincerely came to believe that the Soviet system was wrong, and that his espionage work might help to change it.

Gordievsky, it has been confirmed in Washington—as first reported in London's Sunday Times in November—was a unique source of information in preparing President Reagan for his summit meeting with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in Geneva last November.

CIA Director William J. Casey, with the personal blessing of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, the president's close friend, met secretly with Gordievsky in Britain about six weeks before the Geneva summit, sources said.

Casey's prime interest then evidently was Gordievsky's firsthand knowledge of Gorbachev, his wife, and senior aides; their personalities, habits, idiosyncracies and operating style. As deputy KGB station chief in London, Gordievsky helped to prepare Gorbachev's visit to Britain in December 1984—three months before he became Soviet leader—and worked with the Gorbachev party throughout its British trip.

Last February, it has been learned, Gordievsky was brought secretly to the Washington area for several days of debriefing by senior officials of the National Security Council, the State and Defense departments, and U.S. intelligence agencies.

Information acquired in those debriefings has been shared selectively with some senior officials of the Reagan administration, sources said, but even many high-level officials with extensive experience in East-West relations are still unaware of the contents of these debriefings, and even of the fact that they occurred. Informed sources said that few of the relatively small number of specialists in East-West affairs in the U.S. government have been fully briefed on Gordievsky's information. These sources questioned whether the administration has undertaken a comprehensive study of Gordievsky's information at the policy-making level.

Gordievsky's information is being analyzed in the National Security Council, the CIA, State and Defense, and other agencies, sources said. The level of attention being given to Gordievsky's reports, however, is markedly lower in Washington than in London and other Western capitals, where the most experienced specialists on the Soviet Union are said to be analyzing it with fascination for the light it may provide on the early 1980s, the most chaotic years in Soviet history in at least a generation.

Senior officials in the Reagan administration were operating on the premise, or conviction, that it was the United States that was being "tested" by a threatening, aggressive Soviet Union at the outset of its first term—not the other way around.

Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr. publicly called for "going to the source" of Marxist-suppported guerrilla warfare, and explicitly held the Soviet Union and Cuba responsible for what was happening in Central America. Haig wrote in his memoirs that he was attempting to shock the Soviet Union—but not attack it or Cuba.

Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin, in his first meeting with Haig on Jan. 29, 1981, was not merely blocked from his privileged entry route into the State Department; he was bringing a Kremlin offer for a high-level dialogue pointing to an early summit meeting, which Haig rebuffed. In their first set of talks, Haig's memoirs relate, he read Dobrynin the riot act on Soviet global behavior, saying the U.S. priority was "an understanding on standards of international conduct"; the Kremlin especially "must control its client, Cuba" or "we would have to take action to protect our interests and our friends in the Western Hemisphere."

The Washington Post has previously reported that on three occasions during his brief tenure as secretary, Haig unsuccessfully pressed his colleagues in the administration to blockade Cuba with American naval vessels. The Soviet Union has troops and bases in Cuba, and warships and other vessels in the Caribbean, where the United States did mount a major show of force in the early 1980s.

At the same time, apart from Reagan's own challenging anti-Soviet talk, the secret guidance from Defense Secretary Casper W. Weinberger telling the U.S. military to prepare forces to "prevail" in a nuclear war became public, and a trillion-dollar buildup of American military power was under way.

In its own empire, the Soviet Union faced an unprecedented and volatile challenge in Poland. The decrepit Soviet leadership debated not only whether, but when, it dared risk invading Poland to suppress the workers' Solidarity movement and keep Poland in the Soviet camp as Washington repeatedly issued dire warnings about the consequences of a Soviet invasion.

Many senior administration officials scoff now, as they did then, at the suggestion that the Soviet Union was genuinely alarmed by U.S. military moves or public statements, or that Moscow had any justification for feeling vulnerable. The "war scare" in the Soviet Union in 1982-83 was deliberately engineered for propaganda purposes, these officials maintain—a pretext to create a siege mentality in the Soviet Union, and to frighten the outside world about U.S. intentions.

America's allies, however, had apprehensions of their own about where the Reagan administration was headed, according to West European officials.

Many Western specialists, including some with access to Gordievsky's reports, attribute Soviet anxieties in the early 1980s to genuine apprehension about Reagan administration policy and a tactical decision to exploit that real concern, primarily for domestic purposes and only secondarily for external purposes.

Many analysts suggest that an important factor working on the Kremlin in those years was the maneuvering for position inside the Soviet hierarchy during Brezhnev's last illness (he died in November 1982), Andropov's illness, and his death in February 1984, Konstantin Chernenko's demise on March 10, 1985, and his succession by Gorbachev, a protege of Andropov.

The Soviet leadership referred in public—in terms that baffled many Western officials—to a grave international situation. On Nov. 7, 1983, for example, Politburo member and former Leningrad Communist Party boss Gregory Romanov—who was to emerge as a major rival of Gorbachev in the struggle for leadership—grimly stated in the Kremlin Palace of Congresses:

"Comrades, the international situation at present is white hot, thoroughly white hot."

Last February, Gorbachev told the 27th Communist Party Congress:

"Never, perhaps, in the postwar decades has the situation in the world been as explosive and hence, more difficult and unfavorable, as in the first half of the '80s. The right-wing group which has come to power in the United States and its fellow travelers in NATO have turned away from detente to a military policy of force."

Some Western analysts of the Soviet Union said alarmist rhetoric like Romanov's and Gorbachev's is more understandable in light of accumulating new information, including Gordievsky's revelations. One West European specialist with access to Gordievsky's debriefings offered this interpretation of Soviet behavior:

After years of acting on the belief that the United States under Presidents Richard M. Nixon, Gerald R. Ford and Jimmy Carter had acknowledged that the Soviet Union had achieved true superpower status, and expecting Reagan to conduct a foreign policy not unlike that of Nixon, the Soviets were caught off guard by the new Republican administration.

A series of hard-line statements and actions from Washington alarmed the Kremlin: the new administration's denigration of past arms control agreements or future negotiations; emphasis on development of a rapid deployment force that could be sent all over the globe; redeployment of mothballed battleships and then using one to bombard Lebanon; and more, all with the acquiescence of Congress.

There were also developments in American strategic policies that also caused Soviet concern: vastly increased budgets for weapons, authorization of deployment of MX missiles and development of Stealth bombers to penetrate Soviet airspace; new nuclear-armed Pershing and cruise missiles in Western Europe targeted on the Soviet Union.

Altogether, in this analysis, Moscow—which traditionally operates on worst-case assumptions—may well have seen the Reagan administration as not only determined to force the Soviets back from their hard-earned superpower status, but perhaps even to attack it.

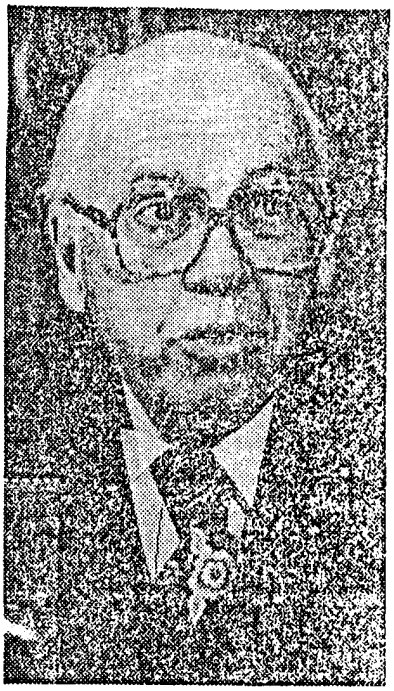
Soviet alarm may have hit its peak in 1983, this analyst suggested, when Reagan unveiled his Strategic Defense Initiative, using such grandiose terms to describe it that Moscow may have concluded it was much closer to fruition—and thus to a profound transformation of the strategic balance—than Reagan would admit.

By 1984, this analyst said, Soviet panic had begun to fade. A careful second look revealed the complexity of SDI. Reagan himself abandoned fierce rhetoric and made overtures to Moscow, and calmer assessments began to come in from Soviet embassies abroad.

This specialist emphasized that his analysis was based on available information and his own hypotheses. Some other analysts in the West dispute the validity of any attempt to fill in all the blanks in Kremlinological reconstructions of the perceptions and actions of Soviet leaders.

In any event, veteran Soviet specialists said, the information Gordievsky brought to the West provides considerable raw material for new attempts to comprehend where the Soviet Union has been—and where Gorbachev is trying to take it.

London correspondent Karen DeYoung and staff researcher James Schwartz contributed to this report.



CIA DIRECTOR CASEY
... met secretly with Gordievsky

PRIME MINISTER THATCHER
... gave approval for meeting

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K.G.B. Defector Helped the C.I.A. Brief Reagan Before Summit Talks

The following article is based on reporting by Leslie H. Gelb and Philip Shenon and was written by Mr. Gelb.

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Aug. 8 — A Soviet intelligence agent who defected to the West last year provided President Reagan with important insights into Mikhail S. Gorbachev and Soviet policy only weeks before Mr. Reagan met the Soviet leader in Geneva in November, American officials say.

The officials said the defector, a former K.G.B. official named Oleg G. Gordiyevsky, had advised Washington that Soviet leaders, although relentless in trying to expand their nation's influence, were ready to bargain seriously.

Mr. Gordiyevsky, who was once the London station chief for the K.G.B., the Soviet intelligence and internal security agency, and who is its highest-ranking officer to remain in the West, also told American officials that although Washington had cause to worry about Moscow, Soviet leaders were perhaps even more concerned about the directions taken by the Reagan Administration.

Endorsed Defector's Views

This complicated picture of Soviet thinking came at a time when officials said Mr. Reagan was just beginning to emerge from his unclouded sense of the Soviet Union as the "evil empire." Mr. Gordiyevsky reinforced the views of other defectors like Arkady N. Shevchenko, the former high-level Soviet official at the United Nations who sought asylum in 1978.

To get this information and a personal impression of Mr. Gorbachev, William J. Casey, the Director of Central Intelligence, flew secretly to London last fall to meet with Mr. Gordiyevsky. Information provided by the defector was then used liberally in the Central Intelligence Agency's profile of the Soviet leader prepared for Mr. Reagan before the summit meeting in Geneva, sources said.

But the sources said there was an important piece of information that Mr. Gordiyevsky provided to his British intelligence "handlers" in 1981 that London apparently did not pass on to Washington for some time.

Believed U.S. Would Attack

Soviet leaders, he told them, believed that Mr. Reagan intended to order an attack against the Soviet Union or one of its close allies, perhaps Cuba.

Mr. Reagan was said to have been apprised of this Soviet belief by the time of Mr. Casey's visit.

For over 15 years, Mr. Gordiyevsky was a double agent, a spy for Britain

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and for a time Denmark. He began spying for Britain while serving as a junior K.G.B. officer in Copenhagen in 1966, his first foreign assignment.

His last days as a double agent were marked by what sources said was one of the most creative and daring escapes from the Soviet Union. Contrary to information made public last fall when Mr. Gordiyevsky's defection was announced by the British Government, he did not defect in Britain.

In the jargon of espionage, his escape was a "clandestine exfiltration." The sources said this was not the first time that double agents had been smuggled out of the Soviet Union.

Information provided by Mr. Gordiyevsky since the early 1970's seriously disrupted K.G.B. activities in Britain and Scandinavia, sources said. His information was also instrumental, they said, in the arrest and conviction of Arne Treholt, a former Norwegian diplomat who was sentenced to 20 years in prison for spying for the Soviet Union.

Although it has been widely discussed in the British press, the story behind Mr. Gordiyevsky's long career as a double agent and his defection continue to fascinate and perplex Western intelligence specialists. The case, they say, raises important questions about the nature of modern-day espionage by the great powers.

No Doubts of Authenticity

None of the current and former intelligence specialists interviewed raised serious doubts about Mr. Gordiyevsky's authenticity as a double agent and defector. But they raised and tried to answer some of the mysteries about a career that has been closely guarded by British intelligence.

These are among the questions:

¶Why did he choose to spy for the British M.I.-6 counterintelligence branch rather than the C.I.A. or other Western intelligence organizations?

¶How did he fool Soviet intelligence for so long, or is it possible that he masqueraded as a British agent while continuing to serve the Soviet Union?

¶What kind of information has he provided over the years, and what was its value?

¶How did he escape from the Soviet Union, and why?

Despite early press reports, intelligence sources say, Mr. Gordiyevsky at first worked exclusively as a double agent for Britain. He was recruited by British intelligence, they say, during his diplomatic service for the Soviet Union in Copenhagen in the late 1960's.

Shortly after his defection, Danish officials indicated that Mr. Gordiyevsky had also worked directly for Denmark's intelligence service from the start, but American sources discount those accounts.

Britain, they said, knew that it could not oversee Mr. Gordiyevsky in Denmark without the logistical help of the Danish Government. That understanding later prompted British officials to reveal his identity to the Danes and permit them direct contact with the Soviet official.

Sometime during his years in Copenhagen, American officials said, Mr. Gordiyevsky faced the choice of working for M.I.-6 or the C.I.A.

A former key intelligence official said there was substantial competition between M.I.-6 and the C.I.A.'s deputy directorate for operations, which handles secret agents. He pointed out that the two agencies often compete for the same sources, particularly in the Middle East, where the agencies tried to steal each other's agents.

British Reputation Cited

C.I.A. officials say that over the years many K.G.B. agents have defected to the United States and worked with the agency. The agents chose the United States, the officials said, because of their feeling that British intelligence had been penetrated over the years by the K.G.B.

This perception notwithstanding, intelligence officials in Washington said M.I.-6 had an international reputation for high professionalism in handling spies.

The reputation of the British intelligence services for sophistication and discretion is believed to be the chief reason Mr. Gordievsky decided to spy for the British rather than other intelligence services, the sources said.

Mr. Gordiyevsky, they said, do[es] less appreciated efforts to place hi[m] in the company of Russian-speaking British agents and to provide little information to journalists after announcement of his defection.

Yurchenko Treatment a Contrast

His treatment contrasted sharply with the American handling of Vitaly S. Yurchenko, a K.B.G. official of higher rank than Mr. Gordiyevsky who defected to the United States last year but later escaped from C.I.A. custody and returned to Moscow.

Mr. Yurchenko and other defectors who have been handled by the C.I.A. have complained bitterly about American treatment, saying that they were rarely allowed to converse in Russian and that details of their escapes were often leaked by official sources. Mr. Yurchenko, for example, was said to be furious that his defection was described in detail in American newspapers.

The sources said British handling of Mr. Gordiyevsky was a good part of the explanation of how he managed to evade detection by the K.G.B. for so many years.

The danger to any double agent comes primarily, the sources said, from his handlers' taking advantage of his inside information too hastily. But the British showed tremendous restraint. For instance, they did not move against other K.G.B. agents whose identities were disclosed by Mr. Gordiyevsky. Doing so would have led the K.G.B. quickly back to him.

There is a belief in the international intelligence community that American officials will occasionally fall prey to political concerns and move too quickly against Soviet operatives identified by a double agent.

[T]he story of Mr. Gordiyevsky's decision to spy for Britain [does] not solve another puzzle for current and former intelligence officials. They noted that when a K.G.B. agent of Mr. Gordiyevsky's status defects, the welcoming Government usually takes action against its own citizens who are spying for Moscow.

But in the Gordiyevsky case, the only action taken by the British Government was to expel 31 Soviet diplomats, journalists and other aides, an action that prompted the Soviets to retaliate in equal measure.

Two sources said Mr. Gordiyevsky had identified several British citizens who spied for the Soviet Union. They further indicated that Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and her aides decided that their case would not be conclusive in the courts and that opposition politicians would criticize the Government for playing politics with the delicate subject of spying.

Another source said he believed that Mr. Gordiyevsky might have identified British citizens who were nevertheless not paid agents.

Still other sources offered an even more intriguing explanation. They reasoned that Mr. Gordiyevsky has been holding back some information to protect his family, all or most of whom are [be]lieved said to be in the Soviet Union.

Triple Agents Called Rare

Nonetheless, the judgment of British and American intelligence officials is that Mr. Gordiyevsky was a genuine double agent and is a genuine defector.

In general, these experts say they believe that so-called triple agents — for example, a K.G.B. officer masquerading as a British agent who actually continues to serve Moscow — are a great rarity.

Triple agents, they said, must provide a great deal of important information to establish their credibility. All of this is given, in the case of a triple agent, for the sake of propounding some important piece of misinformation later on.

A former intelligence agent, reflecting the views of most of his colleagues said triple agents were almost always "not worth it" and "romantic movie fiction."

The consensus in London and Washington is that the information Mr. Gordiyevsky provided has been sound and useful. Government sources in Washington said he had provided intelligence agencies with details of K.G.B. operations in Scandinavia and Britain, which are known as major intelligence-gathering outlets for the Russians.

Called Familar With Politburo

They said he also had a strong knowledge of the workings and policies of the Soviet Politburo, the policy-making body of the Communist Party. The Politburo, the sources noted, outlines the policies followed by the K.G.B. and its agents.

According to the Government sources, Mr. Gordiyevsky was of enormous help when Mr. Yurchenko defected to the United States last year. This defection set off an animinated debate in the intelligence community over whether Mr. Yurchenko was actually a high-ranking K.G.B. officer.

Mr. Gordiyevsky, sources said, was one of the first to confirm that Mr. Yurchenko was who he said he was.

Described as sophisticated and perceptive by those who knew him in Copenhagen and London, Mr. Gordiyevsky is also thought to have provided Western intelligence officers with insight into the thinking of key Soviet leaders, including Mr. Gorbachev. As the K.G.B. station chief in London, he helped plan and run Mr. Gorbachev's visit to Britain in the spring of 1985 to meet with Mrs. Thatcher.

It could not be learned what information, if any, he provided about the ascendancy of the former head of the K.G.B., Yuri V. Andropov, to the leadership of the Communist Party in 1982. Mr. Andropov died in 1984.

Soviet Paranoia Seen

Much of what Mr. Gordiyevsky said over the years underlined Soviet paranoia about the United States, particularly Moscow's fear over the intentions of the Reagan Administration.

Officials are of two minds about his disclosure in 1981 of Moscow's concerns that Washington was planning military action against the Soviet Union or its allies. Although a few British officials were said to believe that the Russians did indeed fear an attack, other intelligence agents discounted this noting that Soviet military forces did not take steps indicating they were preparing for war.

It is not clear how much of what Mr. Gordiyevsky told the British was passed on to Washington, although there are strong indications that his identity was not revealed. Adm. Stansfield Turner, a former Director of Central Intelligence, said, "It's accepted practice to be very circumspect in describing a source, but I'm not commenting on this case."

Another former key intelligence official said London and Washington "will share information but not details on the source itself."

Mr. Gordiyevsky's intimate knowledge of the Kremlin leadership was what led Mr. Casey to travel to London last fall.

Mr. Gordiyevsky was twice assigned to Denmark, from 1966 to 1970 as an attaché in the Soviet Consulate in Copenhagen, and from 1972 to 1978 in a variety of posts at the Soviet Embassy.

He was later transfered to London as head of the political section of the K.G.B. in the Soviet Embassy. In the spring of 1985, he was elevated to K.G.B. station chief in London.

Shortly after his promotion, sources said, he was unexpectedly summoned back to Moscow.

There was said to be considerable discussion among his British handlers over whether to let him go. The sources said the handlers clearly remembered Oleg V. Penkovsky, a high-ranking Soviet military intelligence officer who provided important information to the British in the early 1960's.

He, too, was called home, and his British handlers allowed him to return. By that time, however, the K.G.B. had discovered that he was a double agent. He was imprisoned in Moscow and executed in 1963.

Mr. Gordiyevsky went back. According to sources, he quickly determined that he was in danger in Moscow and signaled his handlers that he was in trouble. The British then set in motion an elaborate plan to spirit him out of he country, sources said. Similar plans had been used before, and details about them have been guarded with the utmost secrecy.

Reported KGB alert to possible U.S. attack denounced by analysts

By Bill Gertz
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

A report that the Soviet KGB intelligence service went on alert against a possible U.S. military attack in 1981 has been denounced as "disinformation" by several intelligence analysts.

The analysts say the report wrongly makes it appear that tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union in the early years of the Reagan administration were caused by harsh administration rhetoric and rising U.S. defense budgets.

NEWS ANALYSIS

The report said KGB officials believed the United States was going to attack the Soviet Union in early 1981. The alert was maintained until late 1983, according to the report in Friday's editions of The Washington Post.

The report was based on sources familiar with material provided by Soviet KGB defector Oleg Gordievsky, who ran KGB operations in Britain until last year.

A report in Saturday's New York Times said the KGB alert also included the possibility of a U.S. attack against Soviet allies, perhaps Cuba.

"The story as it was written in the Post is the straight Soviet disinformation line," said George Carver, a former CIA deputy director now with Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"I found it very hard to believe that Oleg Gordievsky said all the things the Post quoted him as saying, because much of the analysis put into his mouth was fairly standard Soviet disinformation."

Disinformation is false or partially true information that is planted by intelligence agencies in media outlets to influence policies and public opinion.

Mr. Carver said the Soviets have been saying since 1981 that the U.S. decision to place medium-range missiles in Europe was "bringing the world to the brink of war."

He also said he doubted that Mr. Gordievsky, as indicated in the Post account, had ever said the "Soviet panic" over a possible U.S. attack ended when President Reagan "abandoned his fierce rhetoric and made overtures to Moscow."

The article presented false arguments that U.S. defense increases and tough rhetoric against Soviet involvement in such places as Afghanistan caused the Soviets "bellicose defense posture," Mr. Carver said. "That's disinformation Class A."

Mr. Gordievsky began supplying information to British intelligence in the early 1970s. Last year, he was KGB station chief in London until he was suddenly recalled by Moscow. Subsequently, he was smuggled out of the Soviet Union by Western agents and granted political asylum in Britain.

He has supplied British officials with the names of more than 100 Britons, including two members of Parliament, who served as agents and collaborators of the KGB, according to Western intelligence sources.

One high-level intelligence source dismissed the Post report as "part disinformation, part truth," but would not elaborate.

Post reporter Murrey Marder, author of the article, dismissed the suggestion his story contained false information.

Mr. Marder said he "stands by" the facts of the story "with all the qualifications in it."

The Post was unable to determine if the phrase "going to attack" was spoken by Mr. Gordievsky or was paraphrased by intelligence sources who leaked the material.

Angelo Codevilla, who spent nine years as a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee staff, called the reports of the KGB's intelligence alert "a castle of sand built for the purpose of disinformation."

Mr. Codevilla, now a senior research fellow at the Hoover Institution in Stanford, California, said the KGB was probably seeking data about the incoming Reagan administration in 1981. As a result, the agency probably issued new information-collecting requirements to its agents stationed throughout the world.

"The spin that someone is trying to put on this is making 'dog bites man' into 'man bites dog,' " Mr. Codevilla said. "That is, that an intelligence service should be on the lookout for an opponent's plans to attack, is not news."

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